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REVOLUTION

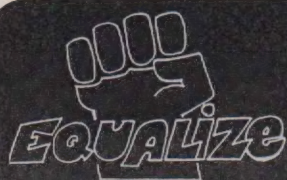
THE FIGHTING PAPER FOR WORKING CLASS YOUTH

AS STOCK MARKETS FALL AND ECONOMIES CRASH...

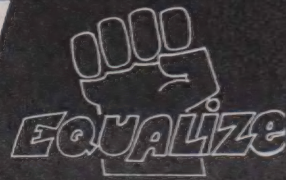


A world in crisis capitalism doesn't work

The world economy is in a mess. To get out of it the leaders of the world will try to make us pay. They will cut our wages, destroy our welfare systems and crush any opposition. The youth and workers of the world must fight for socialism to end this madness. ● See pages 4 and 5 for more ●



Equalize!



fighting for young workers rights

THE LABOUR GOVERNMENT is now set to introduce a minimum wage in April 1999 – which discriminates against young workers. It will write into law discrimination against youth at work - £3.60 for those over 22, £3.00 for under 22's and no protection at all for those under 18! This will just set in stone the situation that already exists, where youth end up in the worst jobs, with poverty pay and conditions.

So we've set up **Equalize**. We're young socialists, workers and unemployed people who want to organise youth to fight this discrimination and win equal rights at work for all workers regardless of age. Most youth aren't in trade unions because the unions have put no resources into organising them. As a result only 9% of young workers under 20 are unionised and 24% of those under 30. We want to draw in youth who are in a union and the majority of youth who are outside the unions into a campaign organised from below and based on action, not just talk.

We'll be building pickets and lobbies of MP's, companies and employers associations who oppose the minimum wage, and organising direct action aimed at exposing employers who pay poverty wages to young workers. For example Rentokil boss, Clive Thompson, pays his workers £3.30 an hour (the lowest paid workers of the top 100 companies in Britain). Meanwhile he is the fourth highest paid executive in Britain and he refuses to give union recognition to his workers.

Some of us have been involved in unionisation drives and we want to commit the unions to organising drives aimed at and run by young workers. We believe that young workers should lead the fight for a national campaign of strike action to ensure that this Labour government implements a minimum wage for all without exclusions.

Student organisations, unemployed organisations, trade union branches, youth clubs, labour clubs and more can affiliate. Contact us and let's build **Equalize** as a militant campaign organised by youth.

For more info, petitions etc. ring Andy or Kirstie on 0181 981 0602.

RAGE OVER AGE RATES (CAMPAIGN)

Conference: Saturday 17 October, Britannia Centre, Britannia St, London

The GMB is organising a conference for young workers to campaign against the exclusion of under 18 year olds from the minimum wage. **REVOLUTION** is backing it and sending delegates.

If you want to go ring:

Rosie Conroy 0181 947 3131.

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Last week **Equalize** ran a stall with petitions and spoke to some young workers in Brixton, South London:

"I work in a factory in Tunbridge Wells, I only get £3.10 per hour, The minimum wage won't affect me because I'm under 22, I think people in my workplace need a campaign like this badly."

"My sister works in a hairdressers around here and she gets less than £2.00 per hour. I don't see why she should get less than the others. They're taking the piss because she's only 16."

"I work at Pizza Hut, but I don't have guaranteed hours. Once I spent £10 getting to work, just to be told there wasn't any"



BY JOY, PECKHAM

And what about Michael Tachie-Menson, a 30-year old black man, who died two weeks after being attacked and set alight by four white youths.? The police never took a statement from him, nor did they seal off the scene for 12 hours, losing forensic evidence and witnesses. They "thought" Tachie-Menson had set himself on fire. Hmmm...yeah, right. Sound familiar? Oh, I think I've heard

Black and Asian people are continually viewed as criminals, not as victims. Coming directly from the top, the Metropolitan Police chief, Paul Condon, in March 1996 launched "Operation Eagle Eye" specifically targeted at black youth, claiming that "it is a fact that very many of the perpetrators" of "mugging" are "young black men". The Police Complaints Authority (PCA) has conceded that police racism affected the way they treated the family of Stephen Lawrence. The officers

LATEST REVOLUTION BOOK REVIEW

by Francesca, Ealing

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"...Think ay the years we've seen in the service. Some silly wee tart goes to college n gets a degree in fucking sociology, joins the force and then writes this fucking stupid policy document saying: "be kind to coons and poofs and silly wee lassies like me" and everybody gets the fucking hots. Then they get this posh wee bird tae come in n tell us how tae dae our jobs and how tae relate tae the public. Aye, right".

As another 'nigger'.

THE WORLD EC

WE ARE entering a world economic crisis. All those pundits, who only a few years ago were celebrating the success of capitalism in China and Asia are now watching their computer screens in fear, as millions of dollars get wiped off the stock markets from New York to Tokyo. Each day brings new panic as the sheer scale of the crisis spreads across the globe like an uncontrollable virus. First Far East Asia, then Japan, now Russia, China and Latin America... First they tried to blame 'crony capitalists' like Suharto, the Indonesian dictator, then the IMF for lending these governments loans in the first place, but what none of them can tell us is the truth.

Only Marxists can really explain what is going on because we understand the the crisis is rooted in the capitalist system itself. Periodic crises are part and parcel of the world capitalist system. It is a system based on production for profit rather than for need. To stave off competition from other capitalists, ever greater proportions of money need to be invested in machinery and technology rather than workers wages. In the short term individual capitalists can make superprofits, but in the long term the source of profits, the labour of workers, diminishes. This means that profit rates have a tendency to decline. Eventually this leads to the 'overproduction' of capital - there is literally too much capital for it to be invested profitably. Investment dries up, and production collapses. This is the cause of the present crisis.

The East Asia 'Tiger' countries of South Korea, Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia, Taiwan, Malaysia and Hong Kong have seen huge levels of growth and seemingly limitless expansion. Between 1992 and 1996 a full 40% of world investment went into these 'miracle' economies. Even up until a year ago the IMF and World Bank were still praising this 'dynamic region'.

Because banks were so eager to lend money, capital was pumped into profitable areas leading to an explosion in production. Inevitably however, this led to overproduction and meant goods were being produced faster than they could be sold.

A pre-condition of investment had been a fixed rate of exchange between local currencies and the US dollar. This was to guarantee the profits of foreign investors against inflation. But as competition became more fierce, Japan and China devalued their

currencies to make their products cheaper to export. This squeezed the exports and profits for the 'Tiger' economies. Eventually, in July 1997 Thailand also devalued its currency in order to remain competitive and this led to a chain reaction with each country in turn following suite. Company debts which were already on average between 30 and 50% of GNP rose sharply, (they were still had to be paid in US dollars) causing a wave of bankruptcies and stock market collapse.

To solve the situation the IMF pumped in over \$40 billion on the condition that these countries undertake strict austerity measures which meant huge cuts in welfare provisions and wages. Mass unemployment and subsequent poverty were the results.

In the past year in South Korea unemployment has risen from 2.6% to 7% and will pass 10% before the end of the year. In Thailand it has doubled and in Indonesia it has soared from 2% to 10%. According to independent experts more than 50% of Indonesians live below the poverty line.

Now the crisis has spread to Latin America. Brazil, Mexico, and Venezuela have seen huge amounts wiped off the stock markets in the wake of currency devaluations.

These statistics don't convey the human cost of what is really happening at the moment. Millions of workers have lost their jobs and are starving as food prices rocket. They don't have Job Seekers Allowance or Housing Benefit in Jakarta, Seoul and Kuala Lumpur. When you loose your job, you loose the right to exist with even a semblance of dignity.

But this isn't just a crisis of the 'Third World' It's a crisis that will reverberate right back to the heart of this sick system - the imperialist heartlands of the US and Europe. The threat we are facing may not seem as acute as that faced in other parts of the world but devalued currencies elsewhere means cheaper goods flooding Western markets. Eventually they will lead to a squeeze on British manufacturing industry because commodities produced here will be uncompetitive. Inevitably it will be the working class who will have to pay through job losses and cuts in welfare.

The Chancellor Gordon Brown and Tony Blair will both point to the crises in other parts of the world and say that there is nothing they can do. In reality they will force

the us to pay for the crisis by slashing spending and creating mass unemployment.

Even the USA the most powerful nation in the world isn't safe. With company profits at their lowest for five years, stock prices on Wall Street will continue to fall. The US relies on its own markets for 40% of its GDP so if the middle classes continue to lose money on the stock market it will further drive down demand.

The US will not be able to spend its way out of a crisis like it did after the October 1987 stock market crash. The Japanese are in no position to lend billions of dollars to anyone.

The myth that Neo-liberalism (the economic theory that called for deregulation, free trade and flexible working conditions) could create the conditions for

RUSSIA: Pr

As Russia goes into economic meltdown and political chaos, **Kirstie** from Battersea answers the questions the bourgeoisie refuse to....

What is the root cause of this crisis?

Capitalism and the free market. Since the collapse of the Stalinist economy in 1990, Yeltsin and the emerging capitalist class privatised vast areas of the Russian economy under the name of "economic reform". Over the last seven years the economy shrunk by a staggering 40%. While millions of workers lost their jobs, state bureaucrats transformed themselves into billionaires. These great mining-industrial-banking conglomerates (Berezovsky, Gazprom, SBS-Agro) dominate the Russian economy, sucking state reserves dry by enriching themselves and refusing to pay taxes.

This crisis in state finances reached melting point in August. The Russian government and private firms who have loans worth \$194 billion dollars could no longer afford to pay them back. This lead to a crisis of



Yeltsin: He w
for long

ECONOMIC CRISIS

unlimited expansion and prosperity into the millenium is exploding in front of our eyes. Countries are beginning to resort to protectionist measures – reintroducing curbs on stock market trading, bringing in currency exchange controls and setting up new tariffs on foreign trade. All this will only make competition bite back as the crisis develops into trade wars.

As we approach the end of the Twentieth Century it is important that we remember how this century opened. It opened in the midst of a world crisis, where the major capitalist nations were arming themselves in anticipation that only a war could wipe out competition. It took two World Wars and the genocide of millions of workers before the bosses restored “profitability”.

We can not allow these parasites who would rather see the world sink into barbarism, ruin our lives anymore. A system that plunges the world's workers into mass unemployment while millions starve is a system that needs to be smashed.

The bourgeoisie will try everything in their power to save it. They will use fascist demagogues like NF leader Le Pen to divert workers anger towards the most oppressed sections of society – immigrants and minorities.

They will use bloody dictatorship to repress the workers movement like they have in Indonesia.

They will use Social Democracy and trade union leaders to pose as friends of labour while delivering us on a plate to the bosses,

just as Blair is doing now.

All of this points to the need for the working class to organise independently. We must take advantage of the current crisis to build a world movement that can defeat the bosses world offensive on our class. We have an alternative to this system – socialism – based on utilising the vast productive wealth of the world to meet human need.

Our fight must be international and our goal revolution. We are a new generation of young workers who refuse to let the bosses plunge us into war as they did with our brothers and sisters before us. That is why the task of building a revolutionary youth movement is more urgent than ever. Join us – make your mark in history.

Proof that capitalism doesn't work

confidence in the rouble and the currency began to collapse. At one point the whole Moscow stock market was worth less than the value of Sainsbury's!

What does all this mean for ordinary Russians?

Misery and poverty on a massive scale. Hundreds of thousands of workers haven't been paid in months. Recently miners occupied the Trans-Siberian Railway demanding wages. Banks have closed, unable to pay people back their deposits. In the country bartering has replaced the use of money.

What is the Russian government doing about it?

Yeltsin and his newly appointed Prime Minister, Chernomyrdin, have no solution except to carry on with their “economic reforms”, hoping that the West and the IMF bail them out. They have no intention of doing anything that will threaten the power and wealth of the rich capitalist oligarchs. The Communists have demanded the resignation of Yeltsin, the use of tariff

barriers to protect the domestic markets, nationalise sectors of the economy and invest into the economy in roubles.

Is there any way out of this crisis?

In any capitalist crisis, the bosses will always make sure that the workers and poor pay in order to save the stocks, shares and private accounts of the parasitic oligarchs. They don't give two shits about the workers they haven't paid, the old whose pensions are worth nothing and the youth whose chances of work are zero. Realistically they have nowhere to go. The West won't lend them money because the government, banks and business can't even pay back their existing loans. Russian production is fucked, it's inefficient and unprofitable: no sensible capitalist will pour money into something that won't make money.

Okay, but surely you're not suggesting we go back to 'Communism'?

When Tony Blair was asked which was better, oligarchic capitalism or communism, he replied: “They're both shit, but at least under oligarchic

capitalism there is some freedom.” (The Guardian 26/08/98). Freedom?! He means freedom for the bosses to shut down factories and lay off workers, freedom for the government to devalue a currency and wipe out the wages of millions of workers, freedom for the military state to arrest, intern and torture people who oppose their system. This is the ‘freedom’ we get under capitalism. But neither did the system that existed before, what we call Stalinism, give freedom to workers. It denied them democratic rights and ensured that the economy was run by a bureaucracy and not the workers themselves.

Today's so-called Communists in Russia don't want workers to have any power in society. Only the workers can solve this crisis and their goal must be to overthrow Yeltsin just as the Indonesian masses turfed out Suharto. They must seize the factories, the banks and the food stores and use their most powerful weapon, the general strike, to bring down the government and replace it with workers' power. These are the goals of Communism and this is what revolutionaries will be fighting for.



to be around

Omagh bombing: the wrong way to fight for a united Ireland

THE TRAGIC DEATH of 29 and the injury and bereavement of hundreds more was a result of a misguided act of isolated republican guerrilla forces, attempting to break Catholics and Nationalists from the Good Friday agreement. The Real IRA, responsible for the bomb, see the Agreement as an abandonment of the revolutionary struggle for a united Ireland and a legitimisation of the Northern Irish State. They wanted to win back nationalists to the armed struggle as they see it.

The Real IRA were right to stand against the Good Friday agreement. The agreement does not provide a step towards a united Ireland but, in fact, reinforces the existence of the six county state. A so called 'democratic body' of Northern Ireland is a contradiction in terms. It is an inherently undemocratic state that still upholds the privileges of protestants.

But the Omagh bomb does nothing to further the goal of a completely just cause. It was wrong, stupid and detrimental.

Wrong because the nationalists had been won over to the idea of a constitutional solution, as the results of the referendum indicate.

Stupid because the population of Omagh is predominantly anti-Unionist. How is killing and maiming your own supporters going to win them over to your methods? This is a criminal act.

Detrimental because it has set back the cause of revolutionary armed struggle. It has focused the worlds attention on republican 'terrorism' rather than the 3,000 plus Orange hate parades that march each year. Forgotten is the death of three children at the hands of Loyalist arsonists during the Drumcree stand off. Forgotten also is the fact that for every Unionist killed by the IRA or Real IRA, there are six innocent Catholics killed by Orange Loyalist gangs (*Index of Death*, Malcom Sutton).

But the full blame for this incident does not lie on their shoulders. The Omagh bombing is part of a long history of death and suffering by the Irish people. That suffering – from the potato famine of the nineteenth century, through Bloody Sunday 1972, to the Omagh Bomb of last month – is the direct responsibility of the British.



The Omagh bombing has provided the British State with the excuse to introduce more repressive legislation

Ever since the creation of the Northern Irish sectarian statelet, encompassing six counties, the British have been central to maintaining the Orange order and to upholding a 'Protestant State for a Protestant people'.

The Good Friday agreement does not alter the nature of Northern Ireland. "A six county state is a bastard state" as the saying goes, and this remains true of Northern Ireland today. (There are in fact nine counties of Ulster – not six – but the British deliberately separated them in the partition, in order to ensure a 'democratic' majority for the Loyalists.)

British troops still occupy the North. Indeed the British still have direct rule over Northern Ireland via Mo Mowlam's governmental department.

The RUC is still a sectarian (over 90% protestant and 100% loyalist), reactionary, bigoted and one-sided police force. It is the most heavily armed domestic police force in Europe and similarly has the largest number of complaints concerning abuses

of human rights in all of Europe.

The 'decommissioning of arms by terrorists' does not cover the RUC nor the British Troops. No timetable has been set for withdrawal and 'reform' of the RUC is a distant, vague idea that hasn't been acted on at all since the Agreement.

For Sinn Fein, the goal of a United Ireland can only be achieved by first collaborating with the British government and the Orange Order. This is the basis of the Good Friday Agreement. They have renounced violence and called on all other republicans to join them in 'peaceful' methods of struggle.

Revolutionaries uncritically support the struggle for self determination by an oppressed people and we defend the republicans from repression. But we recognise that armed struggle by an elite guerrilla force is not the answer and never was. Only a mass movement of anti unionists with the arms available to that movement in order to defend themselves from the British troops, RUC and Loyalist death gangs, can liberate Ireland from British oppression.

The arms of the IRA and Real IRA should not be given up for the British to take care of. The need to defend Catholic estates from pogroms and to defend nationalist marches from attack will continue. But the arms must be under the control of the movement as a whole – not used to bomb shopping centres. A political campaign is required to win over the masses to a revolutionary struggle against the British.

The Omagh bomb was a tragedy that should not be repeated again in Ireland. But the fault of the death and suffering has to lie with the British. They colonised Ireland, artificially separated the North for their own interests, and today still uphold the sectarian state.

The Real IRA were wrong and stupid to set this bomb off. A new way of fighting the British state must be found. A revolutionary struggle for independence must be launched that ends the failed method of elite guerillaism and shows for a sham the reforming process of the Good Friday Agreement.

OPPOSE TERROR BILL

Dear Revolution

The knee jerk reaction of the British and Irish Governments to the Omagh bomb was to rush through, by their own admission, 'draconian and harsh measures' to 'combat terrorism'.

The Terror Bill is emergency legislation that will severely restrict civil liberties and promises many more cases of British injustice.

The bill gives the powers to arrest and convict members of 'illegal' organisations such as the Real IRA simply on the word of a senior police officer. The right to silence is scrapped as the 'non-cooperation' of the suspect can be used to presume guilt.

The part of the bill covering international 'terrorism', empowers the authorities to imprison anyone who aims or 'conspires' to overthrow any state in the

world. This would have included Nelson Mandela until 1994, or anyone fighting against the regime of Saddam Hussien or the fighters of East Timor against the Indonesian government.

The extra powers given to the British police and the RUC are a recipe for disaster. The Guildford Four and the Birmingham Six are classic examples of British injustice against the Irish. The Stephen Lawrence case highlights how bigoted and racist the police are. The new law gives even more free licence to these racists.

It is disgraceful that this legislation was passed through the Houses of Parliament in three days. How long do we have to wait for legislation on the minimum wage or on union recognition, yet in three days they can lock people up in this way.

The support of Tony Blair for the bombing of a Sudan medical factory by the Americans is the act of a died in the wool hypocrite. The U.S.A's blatant show of imperial strength and domination in the region was an act of terror and barbarism if ever there was one.

The Good Friday Agreement was supposed to end repression and distrust - as far as I can see World Imperialism's new act of aggression has shown the falseness of their words.

It is obvious that Blair and Clinton are not interested in peace, but only in maintaining their dominance over, and oppression of people throughout the world, from Afghanistan to Northern Ireland.

By Steve in Liverpool

SPICE BABIES?

Dear Revolution

It seems that the latest accessory is a BABY (It's versatile: you can wear it on your hip or on your back!)

The moralising (and condescending!) attitude that the government has taken on the wave (only 3 - I wouldn't call it an epidemic) of pregnancies hitting the pop world hides a deep seated fear. The fact that three unmarried RICH young women are excited about their pregnancies is not the main issue

because they can AFFORD to have children.

It is the fear that the millions of impressionable POOR teenage fans may decide to emulate their idols. The government panics; translation: the potential of millions of single young mums on the dole. So, the decision whether or not to have a child is purely an economic calculation? NO! I think that a woman should have the right to choose freely what she wants.

This means not only sex education and access to contraception and abortion, but also state-funded 24 hr childcare for women who choose motherhood. This would allow women to continue working without suffering economic hardship and alleviate the discrimination women face in the workplace, whether they want to have a child or not.

by Jo in Cardiff

EUROCAMP SUCCESS!!!

Dear Revolution

As most readers will know, the Revolution Eurocamp went ahead in July this summer. This was the first ever meeting of revolution groups from around Europe: it was a complete success and a valuable experience.

We shared the experiences of revolutionaries from Germany, Austria, Sweden, France, Britain and Italy, learning from each other and helping us to understand what's happening outside our own country.

We debated all sorts of issues, from fighting fascism in Europe, the environmental movements, youth oppression, world capitalism, to the fight for women liberation, and the global economic crisis.

We had larger role play sessions on the Spanish civil war - learning the lessons of a turning point in twentieth century history, whilst examining the role we would have played as revolutionaries at the time.

We came away full of enthusiasm and energy for future fights we face. With proposals for campaigns and international links we have plenty of ideas to work on.

Overall it was very democratic and lively, with open debates over a range of issues. Our struggle is an international one and we intend to build a world wide revolutionary youth league. We have taken an important step towards that goal. If you weren't there, then ask your seller about the one being planned

for next summer. And if you were there then give us some ideas to make it even better next time...

By Max in Manchester

**JOIN
REVOLUTION!**

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STUDENTS: OCCUPY TO STOP THE FEES!

SMASH THE FEES AND SAVE THE GRANT

TUITION FEES are here. This year the grant for first years at university is half that of last year. Next year we won't have a grant at all.

The Labour government has betrayed millions of workers and students over their promises of 'education, education, education!' and its time we stop them from getting away with it.

There is now an immediate need for a nationwide wave of protest and disruption to force the government to back down and give us back free education.

Lets show the government what we think of tuition fees. Lets make them unworkable. Just because they are here, doesn't mean we have to accept them. Join the non-payment campaign and if there isn't one on your campus then help build one.

Demonstrate! Join and build local and national demonstrations for free education. We need to

remind the country that the issue of free education is still here and that we will not sit down and put up with this.

Strike! Rent has gone up again in many universities this year, at



the same time as the slashing of the grant in half and the imposition of tuition fees. As a protest against all of this we should withhold our rent from the university.

Occupy! Last year the most militant sections of the student campaigns occupied administration buildings in protests against cuts and fees. This tactic is one of our strongest weapons as students - we can effectively disrupt and even control the running of the university. For one day or for an indefinite period, an occupation draws attention to the issue and forces the management to listen to our demands.

The NUS has a pathetic position on the governments proposals and an even worse track record on fighting them.

We must force them to act, and to support those who take action themselves. With our union behind us we are in a much stronger position. But at the same time we can't let the the bureaucrats and timeservers take over and 'lead' our struggles, so they can in turn sell us out.

We must ensure democratic control over any action that we take. That means any negotiations must be open and no decisions can be taken behind our backs. Mass meetings must be held to agree policies and agreements to keep our 'leaders' in check.

On top of that, we need to build alternative power bases for students to unite with workers, teachers and parents in democratic and accountable action committees. That can link students with the labour movement and force the unions to support our struggle.

Disrupt the tuition fees - occupy, strike, and demonstrate. Protest against the abolition of the grant and force the NUS to support the fight for free education. Join with the workers and make the fight for free education a generalised fight against Blair. Lets make him regret trying to take away our rights, celebrate this year as the year we stood up for ourselves, fought back and won!

